

Obituaries

Samuel Mitja Rapoport

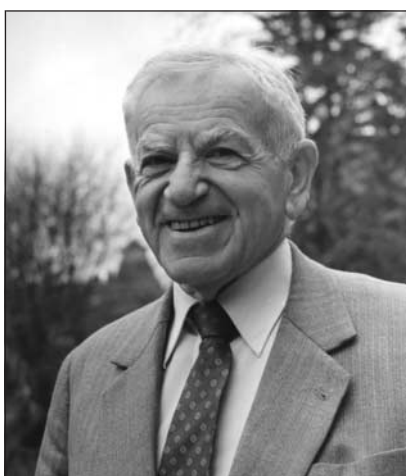
Former physician, biochemist, European Jewish émigré, and Communist who fled McCarthyite persecution in the United States

In the late 1930s many eminent Jewish scientists and doctors left Germany and eastern Europe in fear of persecution by the Nazis. Most of them successfully pursued their careers in Britain or the United States, and only a handful returned to Germany after the second world war.

Mitja Rapoport was an outstanding exception. Not only did he come back to Europe, but he also crossed the cold war borders and, after settling in East Berlin, was able to enhance his scientific reputation in the Eastern as well as the Western scientific community.

On his 90th birthday in 2002, Berlin's Charité Hospital, where Rapoport was director of the biochemistry institute for 30 years, honoured Rapoport as "Berlin's most eminent biochemist after the second world war." His merits as scientist and university teacher were always uniquely praised, while his political engagement as a lifelong member of the Communist Party was often controversial or even condemned.

Mitja Rapoport was born in Woloczysk in the Ukraine and grew up in Odessa on the Black Sea coast. His family left the Ukraine for Vienna, where he studied medicine and joined the Communist Party out of protest against the surging tide of fascism. In 1938 he received a scholarship to pursue his scientific studies and clinical work at the Children's Hospital Research Foundation in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the United States, and



decided to stay on there after Hitler occupied Austria.

In Cincinnati he met his wife, Ingeborg, a paediatrician and a half Jewish emigrant from Hamburg. Rapoport's main research topics were the water and electrolyte balance of the body and erythrocyte metabolism. With his technical assistant, Jane Luebering, he discovered important enzymes that are active within the so called "Rapoport Luebering Shunt," an auto-regulative metabolic cell cycle.

During the second world war his research focused on blood conservation, trying to prolong its lifespan by altering conservation media in order to preserve the energy metabolism of erythrocytes. He succeeded in extending the maximum blood storage time from one to three weeks, thereby saving the lives of thousands of GIs, for which he was honoured by US President Harry S Truman with the certificate of merit.

Despite his gratitude towards the United States, which had offered him citizenship and work, Rapoport continued to be politically active as a member of the Communist Party. Had it not been for the anti-communist hysteria being whipped up in the United States in the 1950s, chiefly by Wisconsin senator Joe McCarthy, the Rapoports might not have left for Europe at all.

As it was the couple attended a paediatric conference in Zurich in 1950, at a time when it was generally suspected that they would be invited to appear before the McCarthy committee investigating people's political past, and they decided to stay away.

Rapoport rejected a job offer by the Weizmann Institute in Israel on the grounds that he wasn't a Zionist. He tried for a post in Vienna, but without success because of an American intervention, which left him and his wife—who was pregnant with their fourth child—unemployed for a year.

In 1951 Humboldt University in East Berlin offered Rapoport the professorship and directorship of the Institute for Physiological Chemistry at the Charité. Gratefully he accepted political asylum as well as the chance to continue his work. "His German with an Austrian-American accent brought some colour into our student life," remembers one of his pupils, the biochemist Eberhard Hofmann from the University of Leipzig, of his unusual teacher.

Rapoport's scientific work—he published 666 papers, the last in 1996—thrived. Additionally, he engaged himself as a fervent teacher by establishing popular biochemical seminars for medical students and writing one of the bestsellers of the medical community in East and West Germany, *Medical Biochemistry*. Meanwhile, his wife, Ingeborg, founded the specialism of neonatology in East Germany and was offered the chair at the Charité.

As one of the founders and reorganisers of East German research, he was hit hard in the 1990s by German reunification, which led to the abolition of some East German scientific activities following an evaluation by West German scientists. To him East Germany remained the better alternative to the fascist state that had caused the death of millions.

Samuel Mitja Rapoport leaves Ingeborg, two daughters, two sons, and nine grandchildren. [ANNETTE TUFFS]

Samuel Mitja Rapoport, former physician and researcher Cincinnati, Ohio, United States, and biochemist Berlin (b Woloczysk 1912; q Vienna 1936), d 6 July 2004.


Advice

We will be pleased to receive obituary notices of around 250 words. Pressure on space means that in most cases we will be able to publish only about 100 words in the printed journal, but we can run a fuller version on our website. We will take responsibility for shortening. We do not send proofs. Good quality, original photographs are welcome. Please give a contact telephone number and, where possible, supply the obituary on a disk or by email to obituaries@bmj.com. We need to know the year of birth and exact date of death of the deceased, and we prefer obituaries to state the cause of death. Please spell out abbreviations.

Paul Thornton Calvert




Consultant orthopaedic surgeon London (b 1949; q Cambridge/Guy's Hospital, London, 1973; FRCS), died from secondary melanoma on 7 May 2004.

Paul became interested in the shoulder when shoulder surgery was still in its infancy. In 1985 he became consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Hinchingsbrook Hospital, Huntingdon, but he missed the excitement of a teaching department. It was almost unheard of then for a consultant to move posts, but Paul defied convention and was appointed consultant at St George's Hospital, London. In 1993 he took on sessions at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital to work on the shoulder unit. Paul negotiated with the Department of Health for an increase in the number of orthopaedic surgeons in training, and published several important papers, notably on shoulder topics and on the consequences of the 1988 Clapham rail crash, for which he had been the lead on-call surgeon at the track and also later at the hospital. He leaves a wife, Deborah, and two children. [R H VICKERS] 

Ian Duncan Chisholm


Former consultant psychiatrist Bristol (b 1929; q St Thomas's Hospital, London, 1960; FRCP, FRCPsych), d 10 May 2004.

Duncan Chisholm was appointed consultant psychiatrist at Bristol's Barrow and Southmead Hospitals and clinical lecturer in Bristol University's department of mental health in 1969. He made a substantial contribution to the development of community mental health services in Bristol and the surrounding area, setting up lithium and depot injection clinics, community psychiatric nursing services, and one of the first mother and baby units in the country in the early 1970s. Later he was primarily responsible for the introduction of a community oriented general psychiatric service in the Southmead Health District in Bristol and was chairman of the division of psychiatry in 1977-82. He leaves a wife, Annabelle; four sons; and four grandsons. [DAN CHISHOLM] 

Neil Hyndman

Former general practitioner Rotherham (b Campbelltown, Argyll, 1918; q Glasgow 1943), died from rectal cancer on 26 May 2004.




Neil served overseas as a major in the Royal Army Medical Corps during the second world war, being posted for two years to a field hospital near Madras. He returned to Britain just before the start of the NHS, purchasing a practice with his brother in Rotherham in 1947. Neil continued to work there for the next 36 years. On retirement he enjoyed frequent trips to his native Scotland and rediscovered his enjoyment of oil painting. He leaves a wife, two sons, and two granddaughters. [NIAL HYNDEMAN] 

John Richard ("Ian") Kenyon



Former consultant vascular surgeon London (b 1919; q Glasgow University 1942; FRCS, ChM), died on 9 March 2004 from the long term consequences of a stroke.


Ian Kenyon contributed to the growth of vascular surgery through scientific investigations on subjects such as surgery on aortic aneurysms, carotid artery stenosis, and renal transplantation. After qualifying he served with the Royal Air Force in the Middle East, rising to squadron leader. He trained at St Mary's, Paddington, where he became a consultant, remaining until his retirement. In the early 1980s he became president of the Vascular Surgical Society of Great Britain and Ireland. Aside from surgery, he had two major interests. The first was rugby and the second was model steam trains, and he built a railway track around the five acres of his garden. He leaves a wife, Elaine. [AVERIL O MANSFIELD] 

Patricia Ann Nettleton (née Girling)

Former general practitioner Bramcote, Nottingham (b 1932; q Sheffield 1957; DCH), d 27 May 2004.


Pat decided at an early age to become a doctor. Her first house job was in Sheffield, in casualty, and then in medicine at Nottingham General Hospital. She gained her



diploma in child health after working at Nottingham Children's Hospital. Before becoming a general practitioner Pat took a part time job with the Nottingham Schools Health Service. Ten years ago she retired and took up bird watching as hobby. She leaves a husband, Don; two sons; and two grandsons. [MARGARET SIRIOL COLLEY] 


Telfer Reynolds


Former professor of medicine and chief of hepatology Los Angeles County and University of Southern California Medical Center (b Regina, Canada, 1921; q University of Southern California 1944), d 5 June 2004.

Telfer (Pete) Reynolds forged a link in hepatology between the United States and Britain. In 1952 he arrived at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith, to study sodium metabolism in heart disease. He found Sheila Sherlock's liver unit so compelling that he specialised in liver disease. When he returned to the Los Angeles County and University of Southern California Medical Center he started a hepatology programme that became internationally famous. He was awarded a gold medal by the Canadian Liver Foundation and a distinguished achievement award by the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases. He leaves a wife, Kit; two children; and five grandchildren. [OM SHARMA, D GERAINT JAMES] 

John Neill Shepherd

Former general practitioner Stockport (b Manchester 1912; q Manchester University 1935), d 28 June 2004.

He was a house officer at the Manchester Royal Infirmary before embarking on a career in general practice in Blackburn. He later moved to Stockport as an assistant in general practice and then was called into active service with the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1940, serving in north Africa and Italy. On demobilisation he resumed general practice in Stockport, where he remained for 30 years with the NHS, though he did work for a further 16 years in private practice. His social life centred on his firmly held Christian beliefs. He leaves a wife, Barbara; four children; and 10 grandchildren. [ANDREW SHEPHERD] 

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